

Comparison of Cell Counts to Other Measurements of Harmful Algal Blooms from WHO (1999)

Relative Probability of Acute Health Risk	Toxin Producing Cyanobacteria Cell Density (cells/mL)	Microcystin Concentrations (µg/L)	Anatoxin-A ¹ (µg/L)	Chlorophyll <i>a</i> (µg/L)	Health Risks	Action Recommended
Very Low	<20,000	<4	<20	<10	Negligible	None
Low	20,000-100,000	4-20	NA	10-50	Short-term effects e.g., skin irritation, gastrointestinal illness	Issue caution advisory. Post CAUTION sign Weekly sampling recommended.
Moderate	100,000 – 10,000,00 or reports of animal illnesses or death	20-2,000	NA	50-5,000	As above for low risk, and potential for long-term illness	Issue warning advisory. Post WARNING sign. Weekly sampling recommended
High	>10,000,000 or visible scum layer or reports of human illness	>2,000	>20	>5,000	As above for moderate risk, and potential for acute poisoning	Issue Danger Advisory. Post DANGER sign. Weekly sampling recommended Consider Closure

Notes:

¹ From [Oregon Public Health Advisory Guidelines](#)

NA = None available

